



Military Police
Complaints Commission
of Canada

Commission d'examen des plaintes
concernant la police militaire
du Canada

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ANNUAL REPORT



Corporate Information

Organizational Profile

Appropriate Minister:
The Honourable Bill Blair,
Minister of National Defence

Institutional Head:
Me Tammy Tremblay, Chairperson

Ministerial Portfolio:
[National Defence Portfolio](#)

Enabling Instrument:
Part IV of the [National Defence Act](#)

Year of Incorporation /
Commencement:
1998

Other:
For more information, please visit the
[MPCC's website](#)

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Operating Context

Information on the [operating context](#) is available on the MPCC's website.

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Message from the Chairperson



I am pleased to present the 2024 Annual Report for the Military Police Complaints Commission of Canada (MPCC). This report highlights the MPCC's achievements in providing civilian oversight of the military police and outlines the challenges encountered this year in ensuring accountability within the military police. This report also marks the 25th anniversary of the MPCC.

In the past year, I have been inspired by the dedication of the professionals working at the MPCC. Beyond the important work that we undertake to deliver our mandate, I am excited by the ongoing strategic initiatives we are advancing to ensure that the MPCC continues to evolve to meet the needs of our users and expectations of Canadians. This year the MPCC issued 9 Final Reports detailing the outcomes of its investigations into allegations of military police misconduct or allegations of interference in a military police investigation. The MPCC also conducted 8 public interest investigations. These investigations, which are inherently complex and resource-intensive, address serious issues such as sexual misconduct, arson, and attempted murder.

Improvements

This year, we made significant strides in enhancing our review and investigation capacity. We updated the intake procedures, streamlined the investigative process, and ensured the use of plain language in our decision writing. Our staff received additional training on trauma-informed approaches, and we leveraged technology to improve the timeliness and efficiency of our investigations.

The MPCC has observed a significant rise in the number of new conduct complaints over the past few years, resulting in an increased workload. Despite the increase in complaints, and the considerable time and resources spent obtaining relevant information from the Canadian Forces Provost Marshal's (CFPM) office, I am proud to report that the MPCC significantly improved its timeliness.

Recognizing the importance of a diverse and representative team, we continued to focus on attracting and retaining talented professionals who reflect the diversity of Canada. Once again, this year, the MPCC is proud to report that no employment equity designated group is under-represented in its workforce. In fact, 32% of employees identify as members of a visible minority, and 16% as people with disabilities, both of which are increases from the previous year.

Challenges: From Resistance to Refusal of Oversight

Strong accountability mechanisms are critical to maintaining public trust in policing. As Chairperson of the MPCC, I am committed to enhancing military policing through accountability.

In the last annual report, we highlighted the resistance to independent civilian oversight from the CFPM's office. This included refusals to disclose information, restrictive interpretations of the MPCC's mandate, a decline in the number of accepted recommendations, a systemic refusal to respond to recommendations made in interference complaint cases and a failure to provide a Notice of Right to Review to complainants.

Despite outlining these challenges in our last annual report, these issues not only persisted but have worsened. In 2024, the CFPM interpreted the *National Defence Act* in a way that avoids civilian independent oversight. The situation escalated from resistance to outright refusal to respect the oversight regime mandated by Parliament. This includes shutting down complaints without having the authority based on dubious interpretations of the *National Defence Act* as detailed in this report. These roadblocks are hindering the civilian oversight of the military police. If this continues, the MPCC risks not fully fulfilling its oversight mandate. While the military police is independent in their investigations and operations, this independence does not extend to refusing an oversight mandate created by Parliament or restricting access to justice.

While these challenges are serious, it is heartening that the refusal of civilian oversight by the senior leadership of the CFPM's office does not seem to affect the work of individual military police officers. During my visit to the Canadian Forces Military Police Academy in December 2024, it was clear from my interactions with students and staff that they respect and understand our mandate. This respect is also evident among military police members who are subjects or witnesses in the matters we investigate.

Legislative Reform Required

The most significant challenge this year was the erosion of the MPCC's ability to exercise civilian oversight of the military police. Legislative reform is needed to strengthen the MPCC's mandate and to ensure the MPCC has access to information necessary to investigate complaints. Without this legislative reform, there is a risk that the barriers the MPCC faces in exercising its mandate continue to dilute the will of Parliament in establishing an oversight system for the military police.

Many of the MPCC's challenges to obtain access to information to carry out its mandate would have been addressed with the implementation of Justice Fish's recommendations in the Third Independent Review of the *National Defence Act*. For this reason, the MPCC continued to advocate the implementation of these recommendations and legislative change more generally to strengthen the civilian oversight regime of the military police.



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More than ever, independent, civilian review of military police conduct is crucial to maintaining public trust in policing. Many of the challenges outlined in this report stem from an outdated legislative framework. The [Comprehensive Implementation Plan 2023-2028](#) proposed by the Department of *National Defence* (DND) based on the recommendations of the Honorable Morris J. Fish places legislative reform for military police oversight at the very end of the legislative reform, potentially taking up to 10 years. We cannot wait that long for several reasons, notably:

- **No Significant Changes Since 1999:** There have been no significant changes to improve civilian oversight of the military police since 1999. This stagnation has left the oversight system outdated and ineffective in addressing current challenges.
- **Lack of Appropriate Powers:** The MPCC lacks essential powers to fulfill its mandate, such as subpoena power, except in public interest hearings. These limitations hamper the MPCC's ability to conduct thorough and effective investigations.
- **Non-Compliance with Existing Legislation:** Even the minimal current provisions of the *National Defence Act* are sometimes not respected, rendering the system ineffective.
- **Erosion of Public Trust:** Further delays in implementing necessary reforms risk eroding public confidence in Government institutions and Canada's civilian oversight regime of the military police.

In 2023, we advocated legislative reform by [writing to the Minister of National Defence](#) and providing a [comprehensive matrix of proposals](#), incorporating recommendations from the Honorable Morris J. Fish's report, and discussed additional reform ideas. In 2024, we put pen to paper and drafted a [proposed Bill](#) to update the oversight and accountability regime of the military police, which was [shared with the Minister of National Defence](#) and stakeholders on December 23, 2024. Drafting this bill is our way of being part of the solution and I am confident these necessary reforms will foster a more transparent and accountable oversight system for the military police.

Gratitude and Appreciation

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the employees and Commission Members of the MPCC. Your dedication, hard work, and unwavering commitment have been instrumental in achieving our goals and navigating the many challenges we faced this year.

Your efforts in responding to information requests promptly, conducting thorough investigations, and ensuring transparency, including through corporate reporting, have not gone unnoticed. Each of you has played a crucial role in upholding the integrity and effectiveness of our oversight mandate. I am proud to work alongside such a talented and dedicated team.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the members of the public, complainants, and the military police members who have entrusted us with their concerns. Your voices are vital to our work, and we are dedicated to addressing your complaints with the utmost diligence and respect.



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Organizational Information

The Military Police Complaints Commission (MPCC) is an administrative tribunal created by Parliament to provide independent, civilian oversight of the Canadian Forces Military Police.

Mission

To promote and ensure the highest standards of conduct by the military police, to deter interference in military police investigations and to enhance public confidence in military policing.

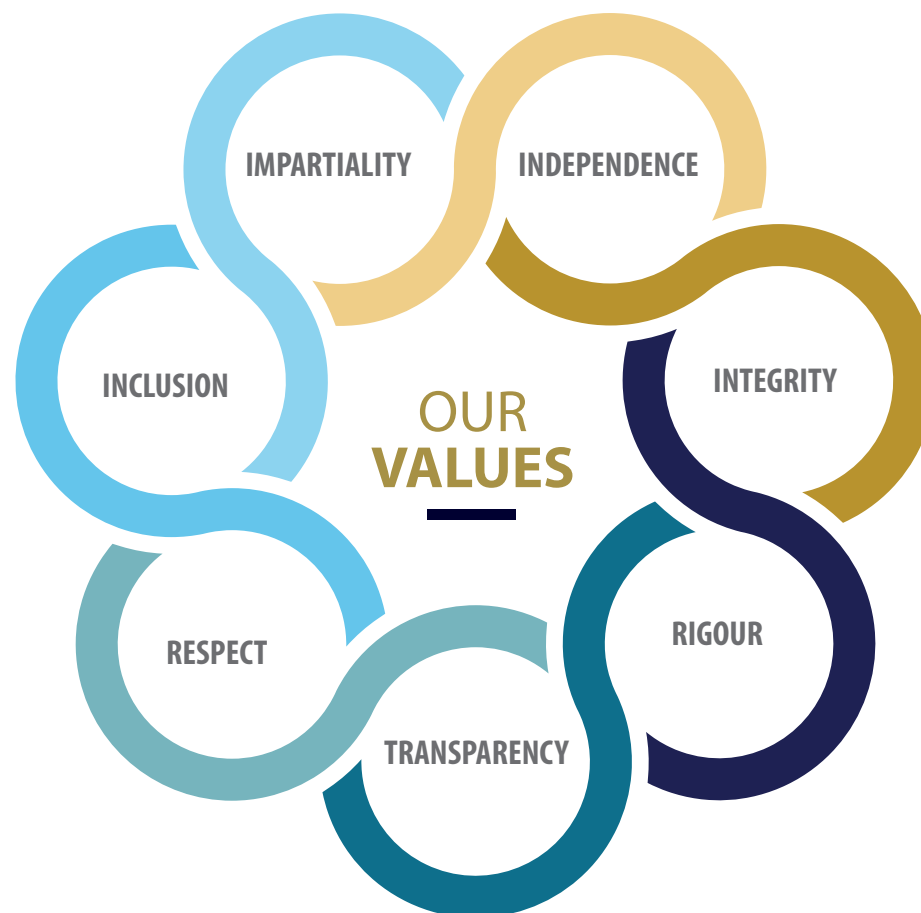
Mandate

The MPCC's mandate is set out in Part IV of the *National Defence Act*, which provides the following powers:

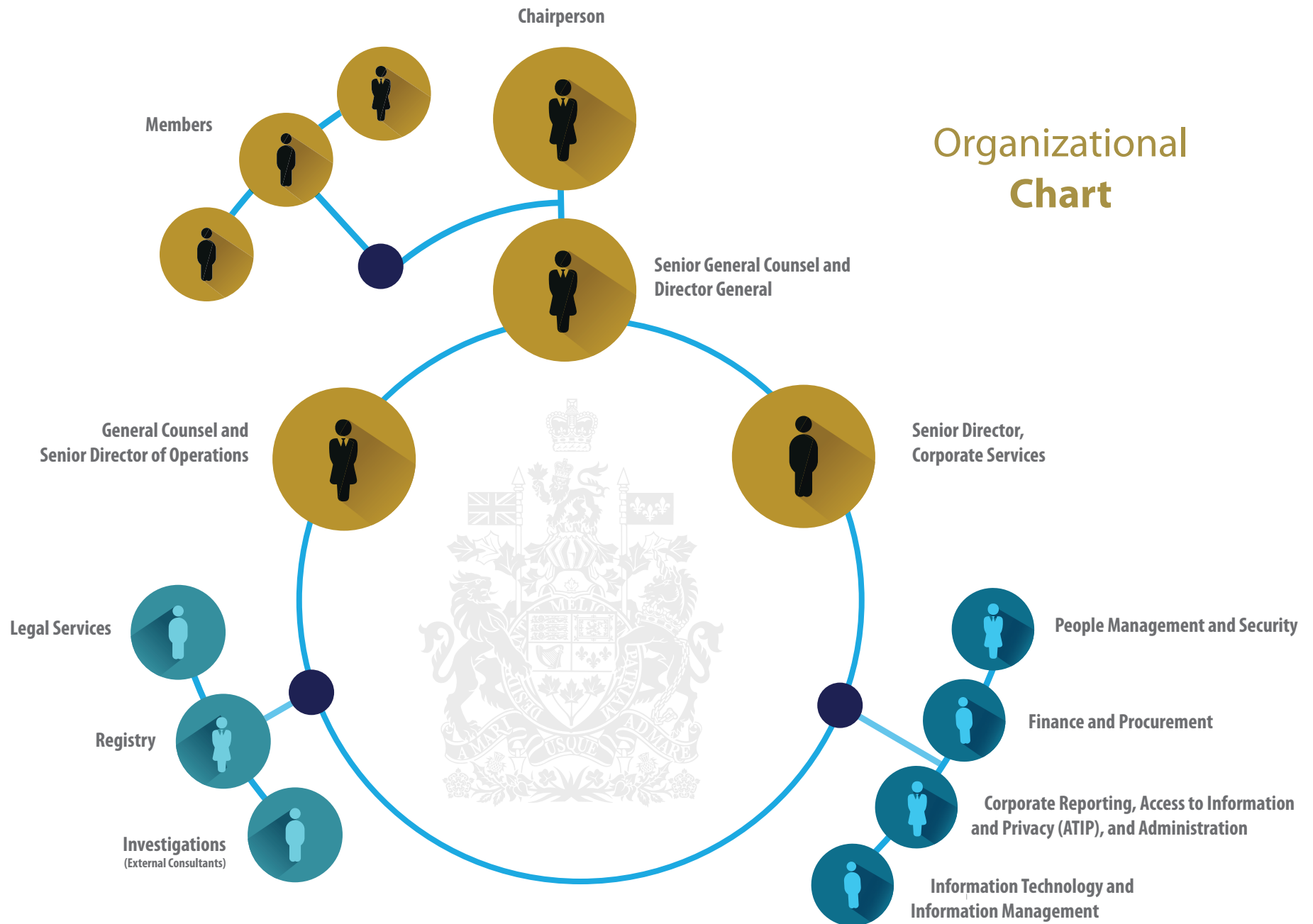
- monitoring investigations by the Canadian Forces Provost Marshal of military police members conduct complaints;
- reviewing disposition of conduct complaints about military police members, at the request of complainants;
- investigating complaints of interference made by military police members;
- conducting public interest investigations and hearings;
- reporting findings and making recommendations directly to the military police and national defence leadership.

Vision

To be an authority on independent civilian oversight of the police by providing an impartial, accessible and efficient complaints process.



Organizational Chart



The Complaints Process

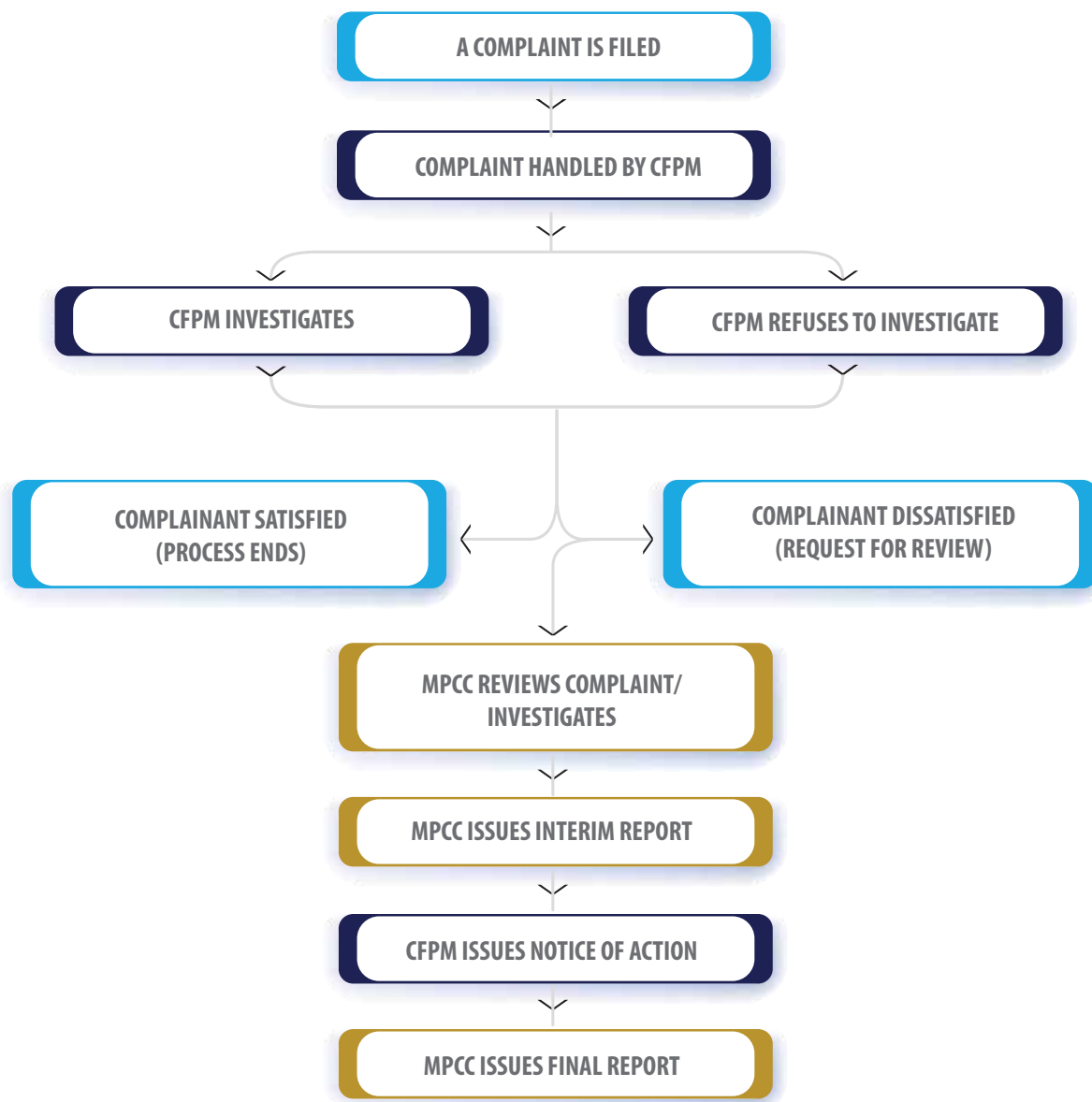
The MPCC has jurisdiction over two types of complaints: conduct complaints and interference complaints.

Conduct complaints

Any person may file a complaint about the misconduct of a member of the military police in the performance of their “policing duties or functions.” These complaints are first handled by the Canadian Forces Provost Marshal (CFPM), with the MPCC monitoring this process. The CFPM then submits their final report, and if the complainant is dissatisfied with the CFPM’s conclusion, they may ask the MPCC to review the complaint. In such a case, the MPCC receives a copy of all relevant documents, determines the scope of the review, i.e., whether an investigation is required, then draws conclusions and, where appropriate, issues recommendations in an interim report. The interim report is submitted to the Minister of National Defence, the Chief of the Defence Staff and the CFPM.

The MPCC then receives a notice of action from the CFPM, which is the Canadian Forces’ (CF) official response to the interim report. This describes the actions that have been or will be taken in response to the MPCC’s recommendations, if any. After reviewing the notice of action, the MPCC issues its final report, which is provided to the complainant, the subject(s) of the complaint, the CFPM and other statutory recipients.

The diagram below outlines the steps involved in handling a conduct complaint.



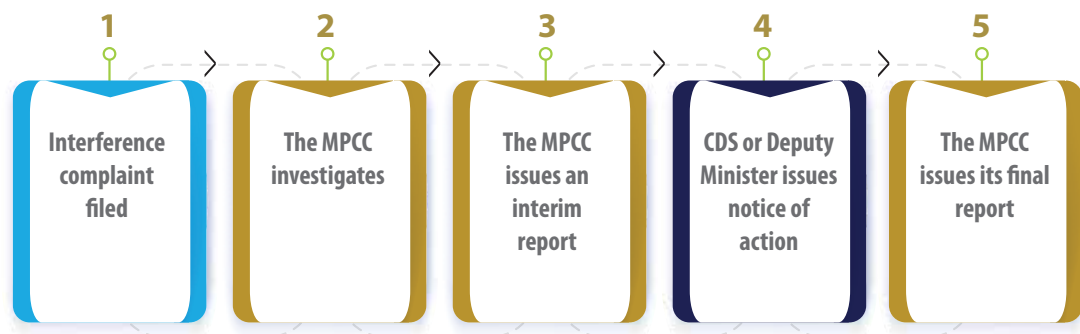
Interference Complaints

Only military police members conducting or supervising an investigation may file an interference complaint if they believe that a member of the CF or a senior official of the Department of National Defence has interfered with or attempted to influence their investigation. Unlike conduct complaints, the MPCC has exclusive jurisdiction over interference complaints.

Following its investigation, the MPCC draws conclusions and, where appropriate, issues recommendations in an interim report. This report is submitted to the Minister of National Defence, to the Chief of the Defence Staff if a member of the CF is alleged to have committed the interference, or to the Deputy Minister if the subject of the complaint is a senior officer of the department, as well as to the Judge Advocate General and the CFPM.

The MPCC then receives the notice of action from the Chief of the Defence Staff or Deputy Minister, outlining what action, if any, has been or will be taken as a result of the MPCC's recommendations. The MPCC then issues its final report, which is provided to the complainant, the subject(s) of the complaint, the CFPM and other statutory recipients.

The diagram below outlines the steps involved in handling an interference complaint.



Further information on our complaints handling process can be found on our website in the following sections:

- [How to Make a Complaint](#)
- [Complaints Process](#)
- [Forms](#)

Public Interest Investigations or Hearings

The Chairperson of the MPCC may also, at any time, cause a public interest investigation or hearing to be held into a complaint of misconduct or interference. The public interest investigation process enables the MPCC to investigate a conduct complaint in the first instance, contrary to the normal process whereby an investigation is first conducted by the CFPM. At the conclusion of a public interest investigation or hearing, the MPCC makes all its findings and recommendations public by publishing its full final report on its website. The decision of whether the public interest would be served by the MPCC conducting a public interest investigation is made on a case-by-case basis.

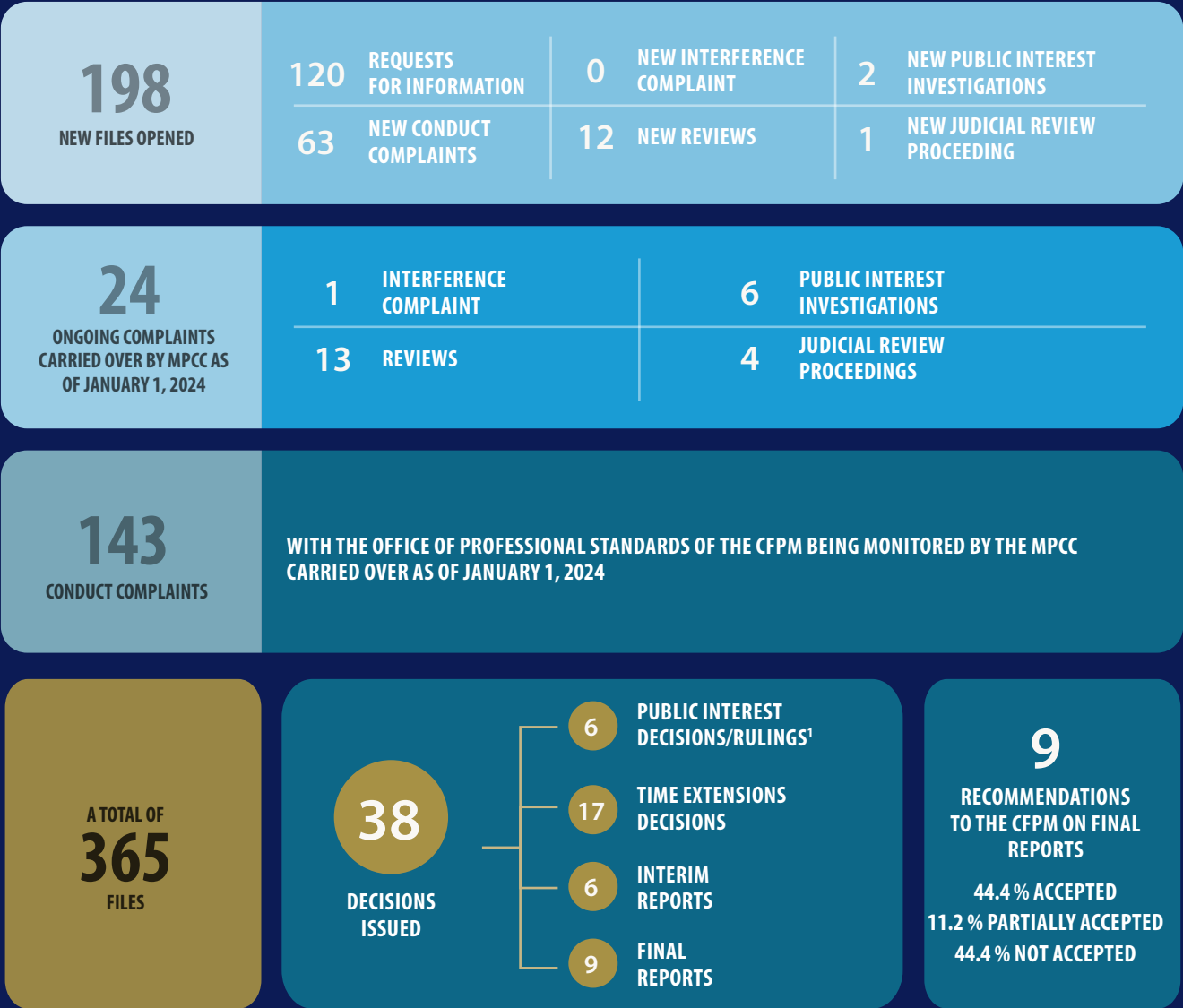
The following factors, while not exhaustive, have been identified by the MPCC as relevant to decisions regarding the initiation of public interest investigations:

- The seriousness of the alleged conduct;
- The systemic issues raised in the complaint;
- The involvement of senior officials or military officers;
- Public interest in the issues related to the complaint;
- Process considerations which suggest that it would be more fair, credible, coherent or efficient to deal with the complaint as a public interest case.

Year in Review — Operations

Statistics

The CFPM is generally responsible in the first instance for dealing with conduct complaints, except for complaints against them. A complainant who is dissatisfied with the CFPM’s handling of their complaint can refer the matter to the MPCC to review. Interference complaints are handled by the MPCC in the first instance.



¹Includes jurisdiction rulings

Service Standards

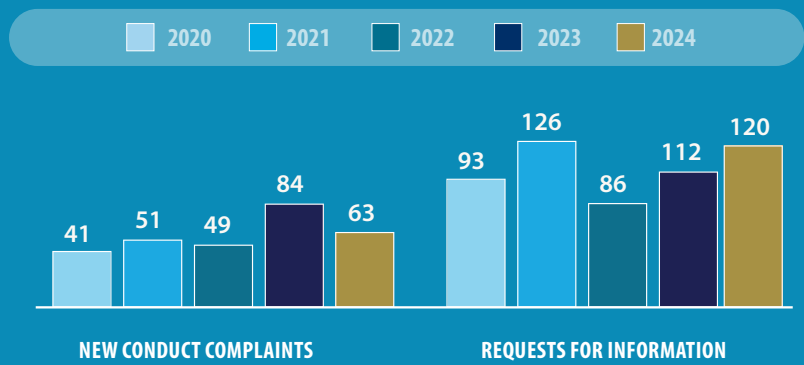
SERVICE STANDARDS DESCRIPTION	RESPONSE TARGET	2024 RESULTS
The MPCC responds to public inquiries	95% of public inquiries were responded within 2 business days standard.	98% of public inquiries were responded within the 2 business days standard.
The MPCC decides on extension of time requests to file complaints	80% of decisions related to extension of time requests to be made within 60 days of the time the MPCC considers that an extension of time is required.	100% of decisions related to extension of time requests were made within 60 days.
The MPCC sends initial status letter to complainant(s)/subject(s) on conduct complaint reviews and interference complaint files	95% of initial status letters are sent within 60 days of receipt of the request for review or interference complaint.	100% of initial status letters to complainants and subjects were sent within 60 days.
Issuance of interim reports in non-public interest cases	70% of interim reports issued within 18 months of receipt of substantial disclosure.	100% of interim reports were issued within 18 months.
Issuance of final reports	85% of final reports issued within 30 business days of receipt by the MPCC of all notices of action.	71% of final reports were issued within 30 business days.

This year, the MPCC successfully issued interim reports for non-public interest cases within 18 months 100% of the time. This performance exceeds our target of 70% and shows significant improvement from last year, when we only achieved 57%. This progress indicates that the measures implemented to streamline our procedures over the past two years are effective, even as we continue to face challenges related to:

- The complexity and volume of complaints;
- Restrictive interpretation and opposition to MPCC’s mandate;
- The delays and sometimes refusal from the military police in disclosing relevant information required to investigate complaints;
- The systemic refusal to respond to recommendations made in interference cases;
- The failure to provide a Notice of Right to Review to complainants; and
- Shutting down complaints without authority to do so or due to overly restrictive interpretations of the *National Defence Act* from the office of the CFPM, detailed in the Oversight Challenges section, along with many other challenges we faced in 2024.

The MPCC has observed a significant rise in the number of new conduct complaints over the past few years, resulting in a historically high workload associated with new complaints, carried over complaints and requests for information.

Trends in the Number of Conduct Complaints Received and Requests for Information

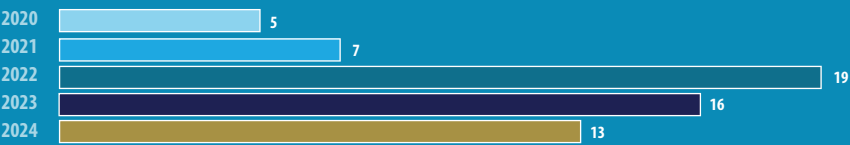


Although the number of new conduct complaints is lower in 2023,, it remains historically high and exceeds the number of new complaints received in the previous three years. The MPCC is committed to addressing the ongoing high workload efficiently and has implemented new procedures to improve timeliness.

Over the past four years, delays by the Office of Professional Standards of the CFPM in addressing complaints at the initial stage have led to a significant backlog being monitored by the MPCC. Section 250.261 of the *National Defence Act* requires that the CFPM must address complaints within one year other than a complaint that results in an investigation of an alleged criminal or service offence. The prolonged delays by Professional Standards have left many complainants frustrated, prompting them to reach out to the MPCC for assistance. This surge in requests has resulted in a substantial increase in the workload for the Operations staff. In 2021, 38 complaints were carried over from the previous year by Professional Standards, but by 2024, this number has almost quadrupled, reaching 143.

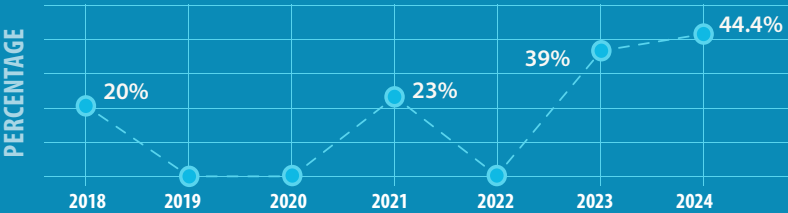
The MPCC has also seen, over the past three years, an important increase in the complaints received related to sexual misconduct. This issue remains at the forefront of our work.

Important Increase in the Number of Complaints Received Related to Sexual Misconduct, in the Last Three Years



The MPCC continues to note that the CFPM did not accept an alarmingly high number of its final report recommendations in 2024.

Recommendations Made on Final Reports Not Accepted by the CFPM, 2018–2024



Oversight Challenges

In 2024, the CFPM's office has interpreted the *National Defence Act* in a manner that avoids civilian independent oversight, notably by shutting down complaints before they can be heard. This is a significant breach of access to justice. While the police are independent in their investigations and operations, this independence does not extend to refusal of an oversight mandate created by Parliament or restricting access to justice without consequences.

From Resistance to Refusal of Oversight

In the 2023 annual report, we highlighted the resistance to civilian oversight we were encountering. Key issues included:

- **Refusal to Disclose Information:** The CFPM has withheld information necessary for effective oversight.
- **Restrictive Interpretation of the MPCC's Mandate:** For instance, there have been challenges to our jurisdiction to investigate cases where the subject of the complaint is a member of the military police serving with Professional Standards.
- **Decline in Accepted Recommendations:** In 2022, 100% of our recommendations were accepted. However, in 2023, only 39% were accepted, with 22% partially accepted and 39% not accepted.
- **CFPM Refusal to Respond to Recommendations made in interference cases:** The CFPM has systematically refused to respond to recommendations made in interference cases.
- **Failure to Provide Notice of Review:** In some instances, the CFPM has failed to inform complainants of their right to review decisions by the MPCC, which is a clear breach of the *National Defence Act* and restricts access to justice.

Despite outlining the above challenges in our 2023 Annual Report, these issues have not only persisted but have worsened in 2024. The situation has escalated from resistance to outright refusal by the CFPM's office to respect the oversight regime mandated by Parliament. This includes shutting down complaints without having the proper authority to do so or based on dubious interpretations of the *National Defence Act*.

Examples include:

- **Harassment Charge Complaint:** A complaint was shut down by the CFPM's office where a woman was threatened with a harassment charge during an intervention with an off-duty police officer who clearly put himself on duty when he threatened to arrest her.
- **Theft Investigation Complaint:** A complaint into a theft investigation was shut down by the CFPM's office because a new theft investigation was directed.
- **Welfare Check Complaint:** A complaint regarding a welfare check where the spouse of a complainant was found dead was shut down by the CFPM's office instead of being put in abeyance during an in progress criminal investigation. The rationale provided was the existence of the criminal investigation, which demonstrates a profound misunderstanding of the distinct purposes of criminal and civilian oversight proceedings.
- **Mistreatment Complaint:** A complaint about an investigation into the mistreatment of a subordinate by a unit commander was shut down in favour of an internal Quality Assurance Review, rather than being properly addressed through the oversight process.

Parliament created an independent civilian oversight regime for the military police, and it must be respected.

Challenges to Oversight in 2024

Refusal to Disclose Information

As an independent oversight body, the MPCC does not have direct access to military police records. We are dependent primarily on the disclosure of information by the CFPM, as prescribed in the legislation governing the complaints process. However, we continue to be confronted with outright refusals by the CFPM to provide relevant information needed to fulfill our mandate.

In the Hiestand public interest investigation (PII), the CFPM refused to provide copies of the related Professional Standards investigation files. In the House Fire-Attempted Murder PII, the CFPM withheld disclosure of any information on remedial measures taken to address apparent deficiencies in an important 2015-16

Canadian Forces National Investigation Service (CFNIS) investigation that nearly allowed a person convicted of attempted murder to escape justice. Furthermore, in complaint file MPCC 2023-048, the CFPM refused to provide any disclosure to the MPCC for a review of a complaint after unilaterally determining that the complaint did not fall within the scope of the complaints process. This was done despite the complainant having a statutory right to a review by the MPCC and the corresponding statutory obligation of the CFPM to provide disclosure to the MPCC for such reviews (*National Defence Act* s. 250.31(2)(b)).

In addition to failing to provide records outright, the CFPM continues to make unnecessary redactions (blacking out) of personal information. Only solicitor-client privileged information should be subject to redaction in disclosure to the MPCC. The MPCC has a legal right to disclosure from the CFPM of information relevant to discharging its statutory mandate. The MPCC is not a private citizen making an access to information request and should not be treated as such. In fact, nothing in the *National Defence Act* authorizes the CFPM to withhold personal information from the disclosure it provides to the MPCC.

The CFPM's persistent refusal to provide necessary information and the unwarranted redactions of personal information impede the MPCC's ability to fulfill its oversight mandate. These actions not only contravene the statutory obligations outlined in the *National Defence Act* but also undermine the transparency and accountability essential to maintaining trust in the military police oversight regime. It is crucial for the CFPM to comply fully with disclosure requirements to ensure that the MPCC can effectively carry out its role in safeguarding the integrity of the military policing complaint process and upholding justice.

Systemic Failure to Provide Notice of Right to Review to Complainants

This year, the CFPM has continued to fail in advising complainants of their right to a review by the MPCC, despite a statutory obligation to do so. Unfortunately, the Chief of the Defence Staff who initially handles conduct complaints against the CFPM, has adopted this approach. This practice not only contravenes the *National Defence Act*, but it also hinders complainants' access to justice.

The CFPM's continued failure to inform complainants of their right to a review by the MPCC represents a significant breach of statutory obligations under the *National Defence Act*. This practice not only contravenes the law but also severely

undermines complainants' access to justice. It is imperative that the CFPM adhere to their legal responsibilities to ensure transparency, accountability, and fairness in the handling of complaints, thereby upholding the integrity of legislatively mandated oversight regime for the military police.

Refusal from the CFPM to Respond to MPCC Recommendations

Responding to MPCC recommendations at the interim report stage is a legislatively required step in the oversight process. It allows the MPCC to assess whether a complaint has been properly addressed by the responsible authority. Declining to respond to recommendations evades the very purpose of the independent civilian oversight regime established by Parliament.

Despite our efforts to resolve this matter, the CFPM continues to refuse to respond to recommendations addressed to them in interference cases, citing the lack of a clear legislative requirement to do so.

In conduct complaint case MPCC 2022-048, the CFPM unilaterally determined that the MPCC had no jurisdiction. As a result, the CFPM refused to provide a Notice of Action in response to the recommendations made in the MPCC's interim report. This is problematic on several levels. First, it is for the oversight body to determine its jurisdiction, not the entity being overseen. Second, the actions taken or reasons for not implementing recommendations made in an interim report are documented and assessed in the final report issued at the conclusion of the MPCC's investigations. This process ensures transparency and accountability for the complainant, subject and more broadly to Canadians, as this information is included in our Annual Report. Third, by refusing to provide his responses to the recommendations in MPCC's interim report, the CFPM undermines the legislatively mandated complaint review process for the military police.

The refusal to engage with the MPCC's recommendations not only undermines the oversight process but also erodes the foundational principles of accountability and transparency within the military police framework. It is essential for the CFPM to recognize the importance of these recommendations and to provide substantive responses. This would not only fulfill the legislative intent but also reinforce the integrity and trust in the military police oversight system. Without such engagement, the effectiveness of independent civilian oversight is significantly compromised, leaving serious allegations unaddressed and potentially diminishing public confidence in the military justice system.

Ensuring Compliance with Legislative Obligations for Status Reporting

Under the *National Defence Act* s. 250.3, the CFPM has an obligation to inform the MPCC, but more importantly the complainant and subject of the complaint, when a file is placed in abeyance. In 2024, the MPCC noticed that the CFPM's office had stopped sending these letters. When the MPCC inquired about this, the CFPM's office explained that it was now their practice not to send status report letters to the MPCC, complainants and subject members when they place a file in abeyance. After explaining to the office of the CFPM that these status reports were not optional but required by law, they acknowledged their legislative obligation and resumed sending the letters.

This small but positive step goes a long way to ensure transparency and accountability for complainants and subjects. Ensuring that all parties are kept informed fosters a more open and trustworthy process. This commitment to clear communication and adherence to legislative obligations helps build confidence in the oversight system for the military police.

Ensuring Accountability: The Role of the MPCC in Interpreting the Code of Conduct

In one case, the CFPM asserted that the MPCC had no business interpreting and applying the [Military Police Professional Code of Conduct](#) in resolving complaints. The position is puzzling as the CFPM has a special responsibility to enforce the Code of Conduct does not in any way remove the Code's status as a source of norms and standards for military police conduct.

The [Military Police Professional Code of Conduct](#) is a public regulation intended to establish clear standards for military police conduct. It is not the exclusive domain of the CFPM but a set of norms that should guide the decisions of all relevant bodies, including the MPCC, courts, and other administrative tribunals. This stance by the CFPM appears to be another attempt to limit the MPCC's ability to effectively carry out its legislative mandate, thereby undermining the principles of transparency and accountability that are crucial to the oversight process.

Timeliness and Accountability: Addressing Professional Standards Delays in Investigations of Conduct Complaints

In the first instance, conduct complaints are generally investigated by the CFPM's office of Professional Standards. The MPCC cannot engage with a complaint by way of a review until Professional Standards is finished with it. Generally, Professional Standards is required to dispose of conduct complaints within a year of receipt (*National Defence Act*, s. 250.261).

Yet, Professional Standards has a significant number of complaints at or over the 365-day mark (some 76 complaint files), with some still outstanding for more than four years. Moreover, Professional Standards sometimes delays even acknowledging complaints until they issue their final letter of disposition. In some cases, complaints have gone more than a year without a Professional Standards investigator even being assigned.

The excessive delays by the office of Professional Standards in handling conduct complaints are deeply concerning. These delays not only deny complainants timely access to justice, but also signal a lack of prioritization of military police conduct issues by the CFPM and the Canadian Forces. The prolonged resolution times are unfair to both complainants and subjects, and they hinder the MPCC's ability to perform timely reviews. Furthermore, the MPCC is now burdened with additional complaints regarding timeliness, exacerbating the issue. It is imperative that Professional Standards address these delays to restore confidence in the complaint resolution process and ensure that justice is served promptly and fairly.

The CFPM must prioritize the treatment of conduct complaints and, if necessary, seek additional resources to meet its legal obligation.

Avoiding Oversight by Shutting Down Complaints Without Investigating

As noted above, 2024 has seen new attempts by the CFPM to evade the accountability process mandated by the *National Defence Act*.

Terminating a Conduct Complaint Without Investigation Due to a Criminal Investigation

Prior to 2024, whenever a conduct complaint prompted the CFPM to initiate a criminal investigation, the complaint would be put into abeyance pending the conclusion of that investigation and any resulting judicial proceedings – after which the complaint process would be resumed. This approach is expressly contemplated in the *National Defence Act* (s. 250.261 - which exempts complaints resulting in criminal or service offence investigations from the one-year deadline for the CFPM to dispose of a complaint). This year, the CFPM has started to simply terminate some complaints without investigating them, by using other processes that are not subject to MPCC oversight.

This was done in relation to a complaint about a theft investigation (MPCC 2023-030 and in a case involving a welfare check related to the death by suicide of a complainant's spouse (MPCC 2024-037). In another case (2021-039), the office of the CFPM determined that several allegations in a complaint were substantiated, but then referred the case for a criminal investigation and a possible investigation under the [Military Police Professional Code of Conduct](#).

There is no indication that the complainant or the MPCC will be advised of the ultimate results of either investigation. Under the statutory complaints process, the complainant and the MPCC are supposed to be notified of any action that has been or will be taken with respect to a complaint (*National Defence Act*, s. 250.29(c)).

The fact that a criminal investigation might cover the same ground as a conduct complaint is irrelevant to the receivability of the complaint against the military police. Both these processes are important but not substitutes for one another.

A criminal investigation is not a substitute for a conduct complaint investigation, which is legislatively mandated by Parliament with built-in transparency and accountability requirements. For example, in a criminal investigation, the complainant does not have the same right to be informed of the progress or results of the investigation. Nor is a criminal investigation subject to monitoring by the MPCC, as is a conduct complaint investigation.

The goals and thresholds of evidence for these processes are very different. A criminal investigation focuses on determining whether a crime has been committed and gathering evidence to support prosecution. In contrast, a conduct complaint investigation examines whether the conduct of military police officers meets the standards of professional behaviour and accountability. Therefore, it is difficult to understand how one could conclude that initiating a criminal investigation is a substitute for reviewing a complaint about police misconduct.

The recent actions by the CFPM to terminate complaints upon initiating criminal investigations, without hearing the complainants, represent a troubling shift away from the accountability and transparency mandated by the *National Defence Act*.

Using other Administrative Processes to Avoid Oversight

The CFPM's office in another case (MPCC 2024-014) shut down a conduct complaint related to the conduct of a military police investigation into the mistreatment of a subordinate by a commanding officer, and instead proceeded with a quality assurance evaluation by the Air Force Provost Marshal. The file was closed on the basis of s. 250.28(2)(c) of the *National Defence Act* that provides that the CFPM can refuse to investigate a matter when it is not reasonable or practical to do so.

The decision by the CFPM's office did not include a rationale or reasons as to why investigating the matter would not be reasonable or practical or why it would be preferable to conduct a quality assurance evaluation.

The MPCC wrote to the CFPM, asking him to reconsider this decision and investigate this complaint or provide reasons for not doing so. The MPCC pointed out that, in this case, the complaint pertains to specific and serious allegations regarding the conduct of members of the military police including: (1) poor management of the investigation in file, (2) deficiencies in the questioning of witnesses and the complainant, (3) missing documents from the file, and (4) that charges should have been brought against the subject of the investigation, a commanding officer. These are serious allegations that fit squarely in "policing duties or functions" including investigating, handling of evidence, and laying charges (as enumerated in sections 2(1)(a), (d), and (e) of the *Complaints about the Conduct of Members of the Military Police Regulations*).

The CFPM responded that as far as he was concerned, his office applied the legislative framework appropriately without providing reasons or explanations to support his statement.

The serious allegations of poor management, deficiencies in witness questioning, missing documents, and the failure to bring charges against the subject of the investigation highlight critical issues that fall within the core responsibilities of the military police. These concerns should have been addressed through a detailed investigation where the complainant has a voice and a right to updates and a final copy of the report rather than being redirected to a quality assurance review by the Air Force Provost Marshal where the complainant has no standing.

The lack of transparency and accountability in this decision not only fails to address the specific allegations but also sets a concerning precedent for the handling of similar complaints in the future. It is imperative that the CFPM reconsider this decision and provide a comprehensive rationale or proceed with a proper investigation to uphold the integrity of the military police oversight process.

The trend to shut down conduct complaints without investigating them is disturbing and suggestive of an effort on the part of the CFPM to avoid the accountability process mandated by the *National Defence Act*.

Misuse of Abeyances to Delay Accountability

Another problem we have encountered is the CFPM's misuse of abeyances, specifically the suspension of treatment of complaints during civil litigation.

It is legitimate to suspend the investigation when there is an ongoing criminal or service offence investigation. Such suspensions, or abeyances, are anticipated in the *National Defence Act* when the CFPM investigates a matter (s. 250.261).

However, in some instances, the CFPM has placed complaints in abeyance due to ongoing civil proceedings (i.e., lawsuits) related to complaints. This practice is neither provided for in the *National Defence Act* nor considered a best practice. It could also be perceived as a reprisal against a complainant for choosing to litigate a matter.

The legislation governing the complaints process is very clear as to when abeyances are appropriate. *National Defence Act* s. 250.261 specifies that only where there is a complaint “that results in an investigation of an alleged criminal or service offence” should the one-year timeline for the CFPM to dispose of a conduct complaint be suspended.

There is no legal basis for putting complaints in abeyance pending civil litigation. Nor are there valid policy reasons to give civil proceedings precedence over the treatment of complaints into alleged misconduct of the military police. Civil proceedings aim to compensate for past wrongdoings and are not forward-looking. In contrast, an important function of the complaints process is to develop recommendations aimed at preventing future problems.

It is crucial that the CFPM adhere to the legislative framework and best practices and cease the practice of putting civilian litigation files in abeyance. This will help maintain public trust in the military police, avoid unnecessary delays, and serve the interests of justice and fairness for all parties involved.

Call for Legislative Reform to Improve Civilian Oversight of the Military Police

The most significant challenge this year was the erosion of the MPCC’s ability to exercise civilian oversight of the military police. Without legislative reform to strengthen the MPCC’s mandate, there is a risk that the barriers it faces in exercising its mandate continue to dilute the will of Parliament in establishing an oversight system for the military police.

In 2023, we advocated for legislative reform by writing to both the past and current Minister of National Defence in July and August 2023 respectively [[Letter to the Minister on Legislative Reform Proposals to Enhance Civilian Oversight of the Military Police](#) & [Evergreen Matrix of MPCC Proposals for Legislative Reform](#)].

These proposals were aimed at strengthening the oversight of the military police and enhancing the complaints process, highlighting their impact and significance.

Sadly, Bill C-66, *An Act to amend the National Defence Act and other Acts* (44-1), does not include the much-needed reform to the oversight regime for the military police. Furthermore, the [Comprehensive Implementation Plan 2023-2028](#) proposed by the Department of National Defence (DND) based on the recommendations of the Honorable Morris J. Fish places legislative reform for military police oversight at the very end of the implementation plan, potentially taking up to 10 years. We cannot afford to wait that long for several reasons, notably:

- **No Significant Changes Since 1999:** There have been no significant updates to improve civilian oversight of the military police since 1999. This stagnation has left the oversight system outdated and ineffective in addressing current challenges.
- **Lack of Appropriate Powers:** The MPCC lacks essential powers, such as subpoena power, except in public interest hearings. Some of these limitations severely hamper the MPCC’s ability to conduct thorough and effective investigations.
- **Non-Compliance with Existing Legislation:** Even the minimal provisions currently outlined in the *National Defence Act* are sometimes not respected, rendering the oversight system ineffective.
- **Erosion of Public Trust:** Further delays in implementing necessary reforms risk eroding public confidence in Government institutions and Canada’s civilian oversight regime of the military police.

In 2024, to be part of the solution, we put pen to paper and drafted a [proposed Bill](#) to update the oversight and accountability regime of the military police, which was [shared with the Minister](#) and Department of National Defence and stakeholders on December 23, 2024.

Legislative reform is essential to strengthen the independent civilian oversight of the military police. Civilian independent oversight of law enforcement is vital for police legitimacy and trust. However, legitimacy and trust are compromised when the oversight body lacks the necessary tools and authority to perform its review and oversight roles effectively.

Decisions at a Glance

Public Interest Investigations

The section below summarizes ongoing MPCC public interest investigations in 2024.

Decision regarding Non-Transfer of Sexual Misconduct Files (MPCC 2023-084)

In November 2023, the MPCC received a complaint about the conduct of the CFPM. Specifically, the complainant alleges that the CFPM has breached the [Military Police Professional Code of Conduct](#) by not implementing the direction of the Minister of National Defence to implement the recommendation of the Honourable Louise Arbour, to transfer the investigation of criminal offences of a sexual nature to the civilian justice system.

On January 16, 2024, the MPCC launched a public interest investigation into this complaint. On January 23, 2024, the MPCC received a letter from the Minister stating that neither he, nor his predecessor, had provided direction to the CFPM regarding the transfer of files regarding criminal offences of a sexual nature. Since no direction was given to the CFPM to transfer the investigation of criminal offences of a sexual nature to the civilian justice system, the MPCC determined that there are no grounds to investigate this complaint further, and consequently, that there is no longer a basis for a public interest investigation.

Read the full decision on our website:
[Decision regarding Non-Transfer of Sexual Misconduct Files \(MPCC 2023-084\)](#)

House Fire-Attempted Murder Public Interest Investigation (MPCC 2016-027)

This complaint originated in 2016 with a Canadian Forces member who felt that the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service Western Region (CFNIS WR) had conducted a negligent investigation of a house fire on Canadian Forces Base Edmonton involving the complainant's ex-spouse and their minor children. Despite conclusions by the insurance company and the Fire Marshal's office that the fire was deliberately set, and the discovery of an apparent suicide note from the ex-spouse, no charges were laid at that time.

This case first came to the MPCC for review in 2018. Upon review, the former MPCC Chairperson, Hilary McCormack, determined there was evidence of a crime that ought to be reinvestigated. She therefore recommended that the CFPM reopen the case and have the house fire reinvestigated by an outside police service. The CFPM opted to refer the matter to CFNIS WR, but with a new investigative team headed by a seconded Royal Canadian Mounted Police superintendent. The MPCC Chairperson put the MPCC's review of the complaint into abeyance pending completion of the reinvestigation and any resulting judicial proceedings. The reinvestigation led to charges of arson and attempted murder against the complainant's ex-spouse, who was convicted in March 2023. The current MPCC Chairperson then directed that the MPCC resume its investigation into this complaint.

On September 28, 2023, the MPCC Chairperson declared a public interest investigation into the complaint. In 2024, MPCC investigators conducted interviews and completed their investigation assessment report, which was reviewed and approved.

In December 2023, the MPCC filed a judicial review application in Federal Court to compel the disclosure by the CFPM of missing and redacted information in their disclosure to the MPCC. During 2024, written pleadings were prepared and there were negotiations over a confidentiality motion to protect certain personal information in the materials to be filed with the court.

The MPCC is presently awaiting a decision on its confidentiality motion, following which, the remaining written pleadings will be filed with the court and the judicial review application will proceed to a hearing and decision.

The drafting of the MPCC's Interim Report is in progress, subject to any further information which may be obtained as a result of the judicial review application.

Updates on the progress of the investigation will be posted on our website, under the header "[Timeline](#)".

Hiestand Public Interest Investigation (MPCC 2022-017, MPCC 2022-041, MPCC 2022-043)

In November 2022, the then-Interim Chairperson decided that the MPCC would conduct a joint public interest investigation into three separate complaints concerning the actions of members of the CFNIS as well as members of a military police detachment located on a Canadian Forces Base. The complaints all relate to the military police's handling of a sexual assault investigation. Six weeks after charges were laid, the accused, a Canadian Forces member, died by suicide.

The first two conduct complaints were brought by close relatives of the deceased Canadian Forces member. They complained that CFNIS investigators failed to interview, or receive evidence from, the accused prior to deciding to lay sexual assault charges against him and that the CFNIS failed to conduct an impartial and thorough investigation. The third conduct complaint came from a former military police member who witnessed the conduct of military police members at the local detachment when the sexual assault was initially reported. He complained that the military police members failed to record the victim's initial police interview, despite there being the means to do so, and that inexperienced military police members were assigned to conduct the interview. In this case, the CFPM's office of Professional Standards commenced an investigation of the complaint, concurrently with the MPCC's launching of the public interest investigation. Exceptionally, the MPCC agreed to defer witness interviews until the completion of the Professional Standards investigation. That Professional Standards investigation concluded in February 2024, and the MPCC proceeded with witness interviews. Twelve interviews were completed in 2024, and MPCC investigators prepared two investigation assessment reports. Drafting of the MPCC's Interim Reports on these complaints is in progress.

Updates on the progress of the investigation will be posted on our website, under the header "[Timeline](#)".

Fortin Public Interest Investigation (MPCC 2023-006)

In April 2023, the MPCC Chairperson decided to conduct a public interest investigation into a complaint concerning the actions of members of the CFNIS about the handling of a sexual assault investigation involving MGen (retired) Dany Fortin, who was the subject of the investigation.

In his conduct complaint, MGen (retired) Fortin claims to have been the victim of a biased and partial police investigation. He further states that he was charged based on insufficient evidence and that his prosecution was the result of undue political pressure.

On January 25, 2023, the MPCC requested disclosure in this file from the CFPM's office, which was only received on June 19, 2023.

On October 13, 2024, MGen (retired) Fortin formally withdrew his complaint through a letter from his legal counsel. After consideration, the MPCC Chairperson decided that the MPCC will continue its public interest investigation, despite the withdrawal of the complaint. Read the [Decision to continue MPCC Public Interest Investigation despite withdrawal of the complaint by the Complainant](#).

After a thorough review of the CFNIS file materials and other documents received in disclosure, MPCC investigators prepared a detailed investigative assessment. This document was reviewed by the Chairperson and finalized in April 2024, and witness interviews began that same month. A request for further disclosure was sent to the CFPM's office in April 2024, which was fully received in September 2024. New witnesses were identified as the investigation progressed. In September 2024, the complaint's subjects were given the opportunity to participate in interviews with MPCC investigators to explain their role in the conduct or supervision of the sexual assault investigation involving MGen (retired) Fortin. The interview phase concluded in November 2024. MPCC investigators have begun preparing their investigative assessment report, which will incorporate all the witness evidence as well as documents received as part of the disclosure.

Updates on the progress of the investigation will be posted on our website, under the header "[Timeline](#)".

Whelan Public Interest Investigation (MPCC 2024-047)

In December 2024, the MPCC Chairperson launched a public interest investigation into a complaint from Lieutenant-General (LGen) Steven Whelan that alleges that an investigation by the CFNIS was flawed, unprofessional, and incompetent. The complainant cites several examples of substandard practices by CFNIS members, including: inadequately documenting interactions with the alleged victim; showing bias in favour of the alleged victim; failing to ask crucial questions during interviews; improperly handling evidence; failing to adequately investigate potential conflicts of interest with witnesses; failing to interview key witnesses; and failing to properly conduct and disclose the interview of one witness.

The complainant suggests that some shortcomings might have been deliberate due to improper influence from the chain of command and a desire for a specific outcome. He refers to the charges against him as “coerced charges”. He names the past CFPM and his past Deputy (DCFPM) amongst the subjects listed in his complaint. He claims that they failed to properly supervise the CFNIS investigation. He also believes that the former DCFPM provided him with false information, misrepresenting the facts of his case.

The complainant also submits that “media leaks” occurred in his case, while the investigation was still ongoing. He claims that the former CFPM and DCFPM failed to investigate the “leaks” or to order an impact assessment to determine whether they compromised the complainant’s rights. He suggests this alleged failure may indicate complicity in enabling the “media leaks”.

Given the seriousness of the allegations, the systemic implications, the involvement of senior members of the military police and the public interest, the Chairperson determined that it was in the public interest to address the concerns raised in this complaint in a greater public forum rather than transferring the complaint to the Chief of the Defense Staff to be dealt with in the first instance.

The MPCC has not yet received complete disclosure regarding this complaint. It is currently reviewing the information and documents received from LGen Whelan and preparing its investigative assessment. Additional subject notifications may be made, as appropriate, as disclosure is received from the CFPM’s office of Professional Standards.

On December 20, 2024, the new Deputy CFPM declined to provide at this time any disclosure to the MPCC in response to its request of December 5, 2024. The Deputy CFPM cited the lack of any legal obligation to provide disclosure in a public interest investigation and that he will consider providing disclosure if he receives a copy of the complaint. This poses a major obstacle to the MPCC’s ability to conduct its public interest investigation. The MPCC is considering various legal options to deal with this problem.

Updates on the progress of the investigation will be posted on our website, under the header “[Timeline](#)”.

Beamish Public Interest Investigation (MPCC 2016-040) – Addendum

In its 2021 Final Report, the MPCC had included two recommendations, which were still awaiting a response from the Minister of National Defence. In these recommendations, the MPCC sought ministerial support for certain legislative changes that would have enhanced the MPCC’s access to relevant information in discharging its mandate by:

- 1) Allowing MPCC access to solicitor-client privileged information in certain cases (legal advice is often highly relevant to military police conduct); and
- 2) Adding the MPCC to the list of designated investigative bodies under the *Privacy Act* entitled to receive relevant personal information (this would be helpful in cases where relevant military police information is held by government entities not under the control of the CFPM).

The Minister responded to the recommendations on November 28, 2024, by indicating that the issues were being “actively examined” as part of the ongoing plan to implement the 2021 Third Independent Review of the *National Defence Act* conducted by former Supreme Court Justice Morris Fish. However, the response fell short of a positive commitment for change and so the two MPCC recommendations have been deemed “not accepted” by the Minister.

Read the full addendum to the Beamish Final Report - MPCC on our website: [Addendum to Final Report-MPCC 2016-040 Concerning the Beamish Public Interest Investigation](#)

Selected Case Summaries

The section summarizes selected conduct and interference cases completed by the MPCC in 2024.

Conduct Complaint File MPCC 2020-001 (sexual assault investigation)

The complainant raised concerns about the handling of his sexual assault investigation, claiming that the commanding officer, who had a personal relationship with the suspect, should not have made decisions regarding charges and should have been interviewed as a witness.

The CFPM referred the complaint to CFNIS for reconsideration, and a senior CFNIS officer upheld the decision not to take over the investigation.

While the MPCC found the allegations unsubstantiated, it noted the following:

1. The senior CFNIS officer should have sought legal advice before deciding to uphold the decision not to investigate the sexual assault complaint.
2. The military police investigators did not explore all relevant lines of questioning, and interviews with the complainant were not recorded, contrary to best practices.

The MPCC recommended that the CFPM remind one of the subject military police members of the best practices and requirements for documenting investigations.

The CFPM's notice of action stated that the subject had reviewed the relevant Military Police Orders, but did not confirm whether the subject had been reminded of best practices as recommended. As a result, the MPCC considers this recommendation partially accepted.

More information on this case is available on our website in the following section: [Conduct Case MPCC 2020-001 Summary](#)

Conduct Complaint File MPCC 2020-032 (custody order enforcement)

The complaint concerned the enforcement of a custody court order. The complainant alleged that two military police officers threatened her with child abduction charges and ignored a WhatsApp exchange with her ex-husband about a later exchange date.

After review, the MPCC concluded that:

1. The military police members were enforcing a valid court order. While the mention of charges could have been perceived as a threat, there was no intent to file a child abduction charge and no evidence of aggression in this statement.
2. It was reasonable for the military police to warn of the legal consequences of non-compliance. However, the military police member should have reviewed relevant military police policies on family court orders to ensure his actions were consistent with established protocols. Since he had since reviewed these policies, no further recommendations were made.
3. The WhatsApp messages were irrelevant, as informal agreements cannot override a legally binding court order, and the subject member's actions were consistent with his legal obligations.

More information on this case is available on our website in the following section: [Conduct Case MPCC 2020-032 Summary](#)

Conduct Complaint File MPCC 2023-010 (welfare check)

The complainant challenged the legality of a warrantless entry into her residence by the military police for a welfare check, stating it was part of ongoing harassment following her report of sexual misconduct and post-traumatic stress disorder diagnosis.

After review, the MPCC determined the welfare check was justified, as the military police members had the following reasonable grounds to suspect the complainant's safety was at risk:

1. The complainant's week-long lack of communication;
2. The presence of her vehicle;
3. A barking dog; and
4. The absence of visible signs of life.

Given these circumstances, the military police believed entering the complainant's home was necessary to protect her life.

The MPCC concluded that while opening the door infringed on her privacy, it was necessary for her safety. The MPCC further concluded it would have been preferable for the military police to explore less intrusive methods to ascertain her well-being first, for example calling the complainant would have been less intrusive and could have satisfied any concern for her safety.

The MPCC recommended improving military police procedures, including creating a national policy on welfare checks, clarifying warrantless entry guidelines, and adopting a trauma-informed approach. The MPCC also recommended to the CFPM to ensure military police officers are familiar with legal principles related to warrantless entries into dwellings and that they review all relevant records before conducting welfare checks whenever possible.

The CFPM has agreed to take the following actions in response to the MPCC's report:

- Develop a national policy on wellness checks to provide a framework for responding officers. It will address when and how checks should occur, including guidelines on warrantless entries, the documentation of 'exigent circumstances' in their notes, and the importance of mitigating potential harm to vulnerable individuals. Additionally, it will emphasize the need for a trauma-informed approach.
- Implement new procedures for handling requests for welfare checks to ensure that the military police have all necessary information to carry out these checks effectively. Before responding to a request for a welfare check, military police will conduct a thorough review of their records to assess prior interactions with the individual concerned. They will also contact the requester and review available documentation unless urgent circumstances necessitate immediate action for safety reasons.
- Review the Canadian Forces Military Police Orders, including those related to warrantless entries into dwellings.

More information on this case is available on our website in the following section: [Conduct Case MPCC 2023-010 Summary](#)

Conduct Complaint Files MPCC 2017-047 & MPCC 2023-005 (assault investigation)

The complainant filed a complaint in 2017, alleging that a military police member failed to investigate multiple assaults he reported, improperly shared his personal information and that he had lied during the Professional Standards investigation.

After review, the MPCC determined that:

- The military police member unreasonably exercised discretion by not investigating one assault allegation.
- He also failed to document the complaint and to provide updates to the complainant.
- The decision not to investigate the other assault allegations was reasonable.
- The information-sharing allegation was outside its jurisdiction.
- It could not address the claim that the subject member lied during the Professional Standards investigation, as he was retired at the time of the interview and the MPCC's jurisdiction is limited to credentialed military police officers.

The MPCC recommended reminding military police about the importance of documenting interactions and investigative activities. The CFPM responded that steps were already taken to ensure proper documentation.

The same complainant filed additional complaints in 2023, alleging that a military police member failed to adequately investigate an assault, maintain communication as per policy, and address a safety concern involving a captain.

After review, the MPCC determined that the investigation of the assault allegation was reasonable and found no evidence to support the safety concern.

The MPCC did identify an isolated period of two months where there was a failure to maintain communication with the complainant. No further action was recommended, but the MPCC suggested that the military police ensure that updates are provided even during a period of absence.

More information on these cases is available on our website in the following sections: [Conduct Case MPCC 2017-047 Summary](#) and [Conduct Case MPCC 2023-005 Summary](#)

Conduct Complaint File MPCC 2022-048 (jurisdiction, handling evidence)

The complainant alleged that the CFNIS had withheld or disposed of exonerating evidence during a criminal investigation. This investigation led the Director of Military Careers Administration (DMCA) to initiate an administrative review, during which the complainant requested a copy of the criminal investigation report.

The CFPM's office of Professional Standards determined that the complaint fell outside its jurisdiction, as military police were not involved in the disclosure of information relevant to the administrative process.

After review, the MPCC concluded that:

- The complaint did fall within its jurisdiction, as the allegation pertained to a policing duty, specifically the handling of evidence.
- However, there was insufficient evidence to support the claim that CFNIS members had intentionally withheld or disposed of exonerating evidence.
- While the investigation steps were adequately documented, including notes on witness conversations, it was found that transcripts of witness interviews were destroyed, and no copies were retained in the investigative file.

The MPCC recommended that the CFPM remind military police personnel of the importance of retaining all evidence, including transcripts of interviews.

In response, the CFPM declined to issue a required notice of action concerning the MPCC's interim report as he argued that the case fell outside the MPCC's jurisdiction.

The MPCC considers both its findings and its recommendation to not have been accepted.

More information on this case is available on our website in the following section: [Conduct Case Complaint File MPCC 2022-048 Summary](#)

Conduct Complaint File MPCC 2023-069 (jurisdiction, release of information)

The complaint concerned the alleged release of audio and video recordings of witness interviews from a sexual assault investigation. The complainant wanted to know how the alleged victim legally accessed the recordings.

The complainant submitted documentation, including a response from the Director Access to Information and Privacy (DAIP), who denied his request to access the recordings under the *Privacy Act*. The CFPM dismissed the complaint, stating it was not related to military police duties or functions.

After review, the MPCC determined it had no jurisdiction, as the release of the recordings was an administrative action under the *Access to Information Act* and the *Privacy Act*, and not related to policing duties or functions. Since the recordings were released by the CFNIS to the DAIP's Information Release Section, and not handled as evidence by military police, it fell outside the MPCC's jurisdiction.

The MPCC acknowledged the complainant's dissatisfaction with the Deputy CFPM's decision, which took over five months, but confirmed the complaint was resolved within the one-year limit set by the *National Defence Act*. The MPCC referred the complainant to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada regarding his concerns about potential privacy violations.

More information on this case is available on our website in the following section: [Conduct Case Complaint File MPCC 2023-069 Summary](#)

Interference Complaint File MPCC 2023-031 (conflict of interest)

A member of the military police filed a complaint against a colleague (the subject) alleging interference in a traffic stop investigation. The complainant had stopped a driver for speeding, who was a close relative of the subject. During the traffic stop, the subject spoke to the driver via Bluetooth and offered to handle the situation. Later, the subject attempted to contact the complainant via Facebook Messenger, but he declined the call. The complainant reported the incident to his chain of command, who indicated that the subject had already informed them about the traffic stop.

After a careful review of all relevant materials, the MPCC concluded that there was insufficient evidence to support the allegation of interference. The investigation found no attempt by the subject to prevent, cancel, or otherwise influence the issuance of the speeding ticket. However, the MPCC noted that it was not advisable for the subject to contact the complainant during the traffic stop and that the subject's expression of frustration to the chain of command was not ideal, given the involvement of a close relative.

Therefore, the MPCC recommended that:

- The subject member review the order on conducting investigations, which prohibits military police members from participating in investigations where they have a personal interest with the alleged offender; and
- Military police members be reminded to avoid involvement in matters concerning close relatives or personal connections.

The MPCC sent its Interim Report to the then Chief of the Defence Staff for review. The Chief of Defence Staff responded that no action was required on his part and suggested that the MPCC raise its recommendations to the CFPM, who was better positioned to address them. The CFPM refused to provide responses to the recommendations, stating he had no legislative responsibility to respond. Although asserting that appropriate action would be taken as necessary, the CFPM refused to specify which actions would be implemented regarding the recommendations.

The MPCC considers its recommendations as not accepted.

More information on this case is available on our website in the following section: [Interference Case MPCC 2023-031 Summary](#)

MPCC Key Recommendations at a Glance

NOTES AND NOTE-TAKING PROCEDURES & MILITARY POLICE INVESTIGATIONS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CFPM to remind the military police member involved (or concerned) of the best practices and requirements for documenting investigative and/or administrative activities, and any other information and opinions relevant to the investigation in the GO file and notebook, in accordance with the Military Police Orders entitled “General Occurrence Reports”, “Police Notes”, “Note-taking Procedures” and “Military Police Investigation Policy”. 	MPCC 2020-001	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CFPM to issue a reminder, as a general rule, to all the military police members at the Military Police Unit at a CFB of the requirements outlined in Military Police Orders entitled “General Occurrence Reports”, “Note-taking Procedures”, and “Investigative Discretion and Investigative Assessments”. The CFPM to also remind them of the best practices of documenting both complaints and all related investigative activities. 	MPCC 2017-047	ACCEPTED
WELFARE CHECKS / POLICY		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The military police to develop a comprehensive national policy regarding welfare checks, addressing when and how checks should occur, warrantless entries and the need to document in their notes the ‘exigent circumstances’, mitigating potential harm to vulnerabilized individuals and the importance of ensuring a trauma-informed approach. 	MPCC 2023-010	ACCEPTED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CFPM to ask military police members to review legal principles regarding warrantless entries into dwellings. 	MPCC 2023-010	ACCEPTED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When receiving a request for a welfare check, the military police should first review their police records to ascertain any previous interactions with the individual concerned. They should contact the person requesting the welfare check and review available documents before conducting the check, unless urgent circumstances necessitate immediate action for safety. This ensures that military police have all the necessary information to carry out the welfare check, taking into account all relevant factors. 	MPCC 2023-010	ACCEPTED

SAFEGUARDING / RETENTION OF EVIDENCE

- The CFPM to remind military police members and other people employed by the Canadian Forces Military Police Group of the importance of keeping a copy of every piece of evidence on file, including transcripts of interviews.

**MPCC
2022-048**

NOT ACCEPTED

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- The CFPM to ensure the military police member involved review the requirements of Military Police Order entitled “Military Police Investigation Policy” and be reminded of best practices relating to conflict-of-interest situations.

**MPCC
2023-031**

NOT ACCEPTED

- The CFPM to remind military police members to exercise caution in police interventions and avoid involvement in matters involving close relatives or personal connections to prevent any perception of conflict of interest or interference.

**MPCC
2023-031**

NOT ACCEPTED

- The CFPM to include topics on managing conflict of interest and maintaining professional boundaries in their regular training sessions for military police members.

**MPCC
2023-031**

NOT ACCEPTED

Access to Justice

To promote access to justice and ensure fair resolution of complaints, the MPCC has invested significant resources to address the CFPM's refusal of independent civilian oversight. This includes issues such as prematurely shutting down complaints, not providing necessary information for investigations, failing to inform complainants of their right to review, not responding to MPCC recommendations, and attempting to limit the MPCC's jurisdiction.

Despite these challenges to civilian oversight, the MPCC is committed to improving access to justice for complainants, subject members, and witnesses involved in the complaints process. As an oversight agency and an administrative tribunal, the MPCC is determined to fulfill its mandate.

In 2023, the focus was on training MPCC employees and members in decision-writing and trauma-informed approaches. In January 2024, we conducted training for Registry Officers that focused on recognizing trauma and effectively supporting individuals experiencing it during our intake processes.

Throughout 2024, we have been prioritizing improvements to our operational processes. For instance, the MPCC has conducted a comprehensive review of its investigative procedures to ensure that reviews and investigations are completed more quickly and efficiently. Even with an increase in complaints, the MPCC has successfully reduced the average time taken to complete these investigations. Additionally, the MPCC has introduced an online withdrawal of a complaint form to better inform complainants about the process and a survey to gather feedback on how well we are meeting their needs.



Outreach and Engagement

The MPCC'S Outreach

The MPCC's Outreach program is essential to build relationships with the various stakeholders involved in its mandate and mission.

Canadian Forces and Department of National Defence

As part of its program, the MPCC regularly offers awareness sessions at the Canadian Forces Military Police Academy in Borden, Ontario. This year the MPCC provided virtual presentations to the MP Junior Patroller Course (formerly Qualification Level 3) in January, and in-person sessions to the MP Junior Patroller Course, CFNIS and Canadian Forces Military Police Academy Staff and the Base Commander at CFB Borden in November.

The MPCC presented to the Canadian Defence Academy in August. The MPCC Chairperson also met with the Deputy Minister of National Defence to provide an overview of our work in November.

Other Groups and Institutions

The MPCC presented to various interested groups this year, including: students at the Canadian Police College in January and December; the Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime; a group of visiting Ukrainian Parliamentarians who were examining various models of oversight; and the Union of National Defence Employees.

The MPCC participated in the Heads of Police Oversight Agencies Annual Meeting and the Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (CACOLE). It also participated in meetings of the Heads of Federal Agencies and the Council of Federal Administrative Tribunal Heads (CFATH).

These initiatives have strengthened our commitment to informing our community about the importance of civilian oversight of military police.

Year in Review – Corporate Services

Financial Statement

BUDGET CONSTRAINT

The MPCC's total actual expenditures for the 2023–2024 fiscal year ending March 31, 2024, amounted to \$5,634,282. This table shows the breakdown of budget allocations for the period of April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025.

	Main Estimates 2024-2025	Additional Authorities to be Received in 2024-2025	Total Available for Use in 2024-2025
Salaries	\$3,514,577	\$398,315	\$3,912,892
Operating Costs	\$1,587,100	\$ 75,865	\$1,662,965
Total Budget	\$5,101,677	\$474,180	\$5,575,857

In 2024-2025, the MPCC sought a \$500K permanent transfer from the Department of National Defence (DND) to help manage the increase in number and complexity of complaints, as well as the steady increase in its fixed operating costs. DND agreed to transfer \$250K permanently, with the other \$250K for fiscal years 2024-2025 and 2025-2026. The MPCC will continue to monitor its caseload and ability to deliver its mandate.

As of December 31, 2024, the MPCC was forecasting an overall budget surplus of \$61K.

As of December 31, 2024, the number of complaints continued at a high level. While the number of complaints has decreased compared to last year, it is still significantly high and surpasses the figures from the past three years and we continue to see a large number of complaints received related to sexual misconduct.

The MPCC's primary role is to handle complaints, which means it often faces uncertainty regarding the number and complexity of cases each year. This year, the MPCC has incurred significant expenses due to the high volume and complexity of complaints, as well as various oversight challenges, including the need to take legal action in the Federal Court. The CFPM's refusal to provide essential documents for investigations has placed a considerable strain on the MPCC's resources, making it difficult to meet expected service standards.

Diversity, Accessibility & Inclusion

The MPCC is committed to strengthening its internal processes, as it strives to become more inclusive and accessible for the benefit of those it serves. The MPCC remains steadfast in using an approach that is trauma-informed, incorporating gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) principles, and viewing its work through an equity, diversity and inclusion lens.

This year, to improve accessibility, equity, diversity, and inclusion, the MPCC has:

- **Continued to strive** to provide an equitable, diverse and inclusive workplace. The MPCC is committed to offering accessible services to all users, complainants, users and stakeholders. In 2024, particular attention was paid to accessibility and trauma-informed intake, investigations and communications with users.
- **Published its second progress report** on its multi-year accessibility plan, which includes improvements to the MPCC's tools and workplace.
- **Supported the priorities** of the Clerk of the Privy Council and central agencies or government initiatives, including those dedicated to anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion in the federal public service. This support included updating the code of conduct for MPCC's employees and members.
- **Improved and added common objectives** and performance indicators for all MPCC employees, which are reflected in their performance agreements, with regard to equity, diversity and inclusion.
- **Attracted and retained talented professionals** who reflect the diversity of Canada. Notably, 32% of employees identify as members of a visible minority, and 16% as people with disabilities, both of which are increases from the previous year. The MPCC is also surpassing the aggregated workforce availability estimates for these employment equity designated groups, where members of visible minorities were represented at 17.3% and persons with disabilities were represented at 9.2%, according to the [Employment Equity in the Public Service of Canada for Fiscal Year 2022 to 2023](#).

- **Discussed and presented regular awareness sessions** at staff meetings, focusing on accessibility, equity, diversity and inclusion. For example, during Black History Month, a training session on anti-racism was organized with a guest speaker who shared real-life experiences. The presentation covered topics such as implementing an inclusive culture and understanding diversity, equity and inclusion in action.

Finally, the MPCC is proud to report that it exceeded its target for contracts with Aboriginal companies. This year, 8% of the MPCC's contracts were awarded to these companies, far exceeding the initial target of 3%.

Mental Health & Employee Well-Being

The MPCC has taken several steps to foster a safe, positive and healthy workplace:

- **Maintained a harassment-free environment** by continuing to use an external harassment policy implemented in 2022. This policy provides employees with tools to address unreasonable behaviour and supports the psychological well-being of front-line employees.
- **Proactively shared and encouraged participation** in mental health seminars and learning sessions to build mental health literacy. In January 2024, an all-staff event was held to mark Bell Let's Talk Day, facilitated by the MPCC's mental health champion, the Senior General Counsel and Director General.
- **Continued to offer a variety of services** to employees through an agreement with Health Canada. These services include Informal Conflict Management Services, an Ombudsperson Service, an Employee Assistance Program, and an arm's length service for reporting violence or harassment.
- **Made mental wellness a frequent topic** of discussion at all staff meetings throughout the year. The MPCC also promoted office cohesion by establishing "lunch and learn" sessions and continuing informal coffee breaks.
- **Engaged employees in surveys** throughout the year to better understand stressors and find solutions for achieving a better work-life balance.



The Military Police Complaints Commission (MPCC) was established in response to recommendations from the Somalia Inquiry that raised serious questions about the administration of justice within the Canadian Forces. It was created to provide independent, civilian oversight of the military police.

Since its inception, the MPCC has reviewed a total of:

1499 FILES	1235 CONDUCT COMPLAINTS	45 INTERFERENCE COMPLAINTS	189 REVIEWS	465 RECOMMENDATIONS MADE SINCE INCEPTION
	27 PUBLIC INTEREST INVESTIGATIONS	3 PUBLIC INTEREST HEARINGS		

Leadership and Key Contributions: Over the years, the MPCC has been led by several distinguished Chairpersons who have each contributed to its development:



Louise Cobetto (2001-2005)

First and founding Chairperson of the MPCC; established the foundational processes, including a complaint process from the ground up and emphasized the importance of accountability and transparency in military policing.



Glenn Stannard (2009-2015)

Presided over two key public interest hearings: the first on the military police investigation of the military police's failure to investigate detainee handling in Afghanistan (MPCC 2008-042) and the second on the military police investigations into the death by suicide of a Canadian Forces member at a Canadian Forces Base.



Peter Tinsley (2005-2009)

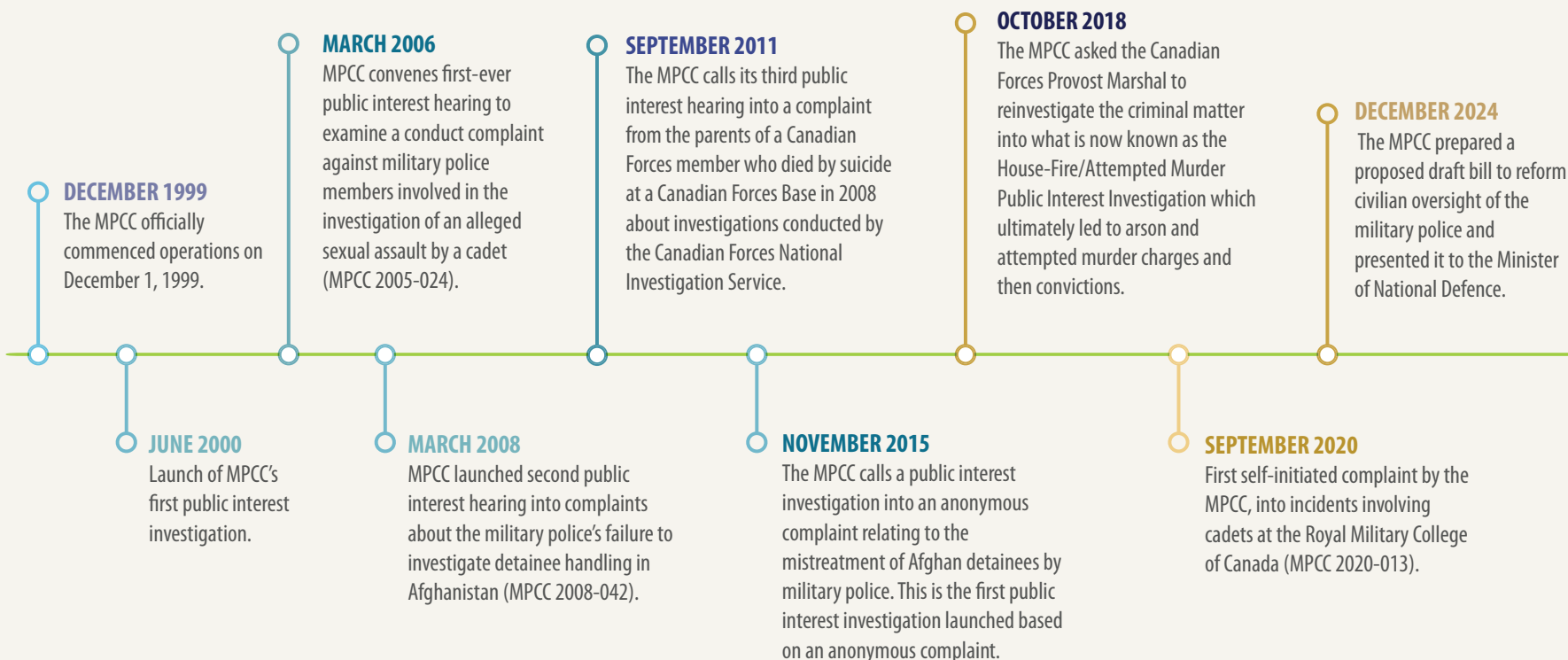
Presided over the first public interest hearing and successfully opposed legislative changes that would have restricted the MPCC's mandate.



Hilary McCormack (2015-2021)

Called several public interest investigations such as the anonymous complaint into the investigation of the treatment of detainees in Kandahar in 2009-2010. She also launched the first public interest investigation stemming from a self-initiated complaint. She further asked the Canadian Forces Provost Marshal to reinvestigate the matter into what is now known as the House Fire-Attempted Murder Public Interest Investigation, which ultimately led to arson and attempted murder charges and convictions.

Key Milestones



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ANNUAL REPORT

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